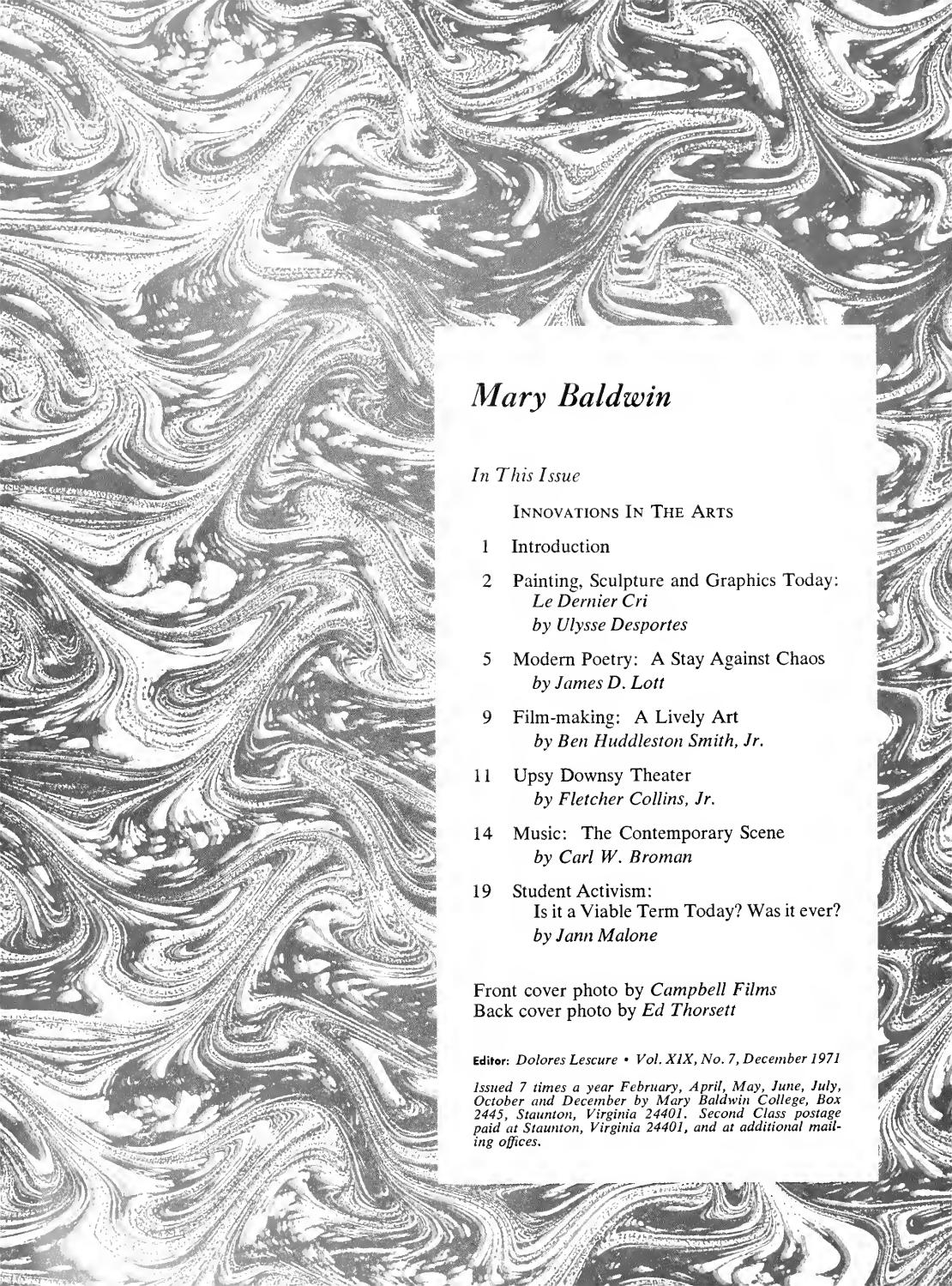


# *Mary Baldwin*





## Mary Baldwin

### In This Issue

#### INNOVATIONS IN THE ARTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Painting, Sculpture and Graphics Today:  
*Le Dernier Cri*  
by Ulysse Desportes
- 5 Modern Poetry: A Stay Against Chaos  
by James D. Lott
- 9 Film-making: A Lively Art  
by Ben Huddleston Smith, Jr.
- 11 Upsy Downsy Theater  
by Fletcher Collins, Jr.
- 14 Music: The Contemporary Scene  
by Carl W. Broman
- 19 Student Activism:  
Is it a Viable Term Today? Was it ever?  
by Jann Malone

Front cover photo by *Campbell Films*  
Back cover photo by *Ed Thorsett*

**Editor:** Dolores Lescure • Vol. XIX, No. 7, December 1971

Issued 7 times a year February, April, May, June, July, October and December by Mary Baldwin College, Box 2445, Staunton, Virginia 24401. Second Class postage paid at Staunton, Virginia 24401, and at additional mailing offices.

## *INNOVATIONS IN THE ARTS*

Like so many other things in today's world, the arts seem to be moving too fast for us to keep up our appreciation. Appreciation comes from understanding, but, unfortunately, our information about what is happening in the arts today is often lacking. As a result, contemporary music, art, drama, and literature baffle us more than they stimulate appreciation.

That is why the Mary Baldwin Alumnae Association has selected "Innovations in the Arts" as the topic for the 1972 Continuing Education study.

The study begins on the following pages with articles about what's new (or not so new) in drama, painting, music, poetry, and cinema. Written by five Mary Baldwin professors, these articles are the starting point for our detailed study.

Books, articles and records for further reading are suggested in the articles and some of them may be obtained through the college book store. Others you may find in your local libraries. Information for follow-up programs on "Innovations in the Arts" will be sent to chapter presidents.

Capping the study will be the Mary Baldwin Fine Arts Festival scheduled to coincide with Alumnae Homecoming weekend, April 29 and 30. The Festival will include art exhibits, concerts and a play, thus giving alumnae a chance to see student work in the arts.

"Innovations in the Arts" study is diversified enough to offer an opportunity for participants to choose an area or areas of particular interest. The program has also been planned so that a chapter or an individual can pursue it with equal ease, and the suggested materials have been limited for easy handling.

Education does not end with graduation. We hope all of you will join in this exciting study.



JEAN LAMBETH Hart '67  
*Vice President for Continuing Education*

# *Painting, Sculpture And Graphics Today: Le Dernier Cri*

By ULYSSE DESPORTES  
*Professor of Art*

THE history of the arts, like that of all human activities in their interesting periods, recounts the discovery of new ways. In our time, population growth and post-war affluence, combined with the compulsions to innovate and to rationalize, have produced a dense and complicated situation in the visual arts that is not easy to describe. The number of people seriously working as painters and sculptors has multiplied several times since the 1940's. The variety of directions, styles, and interests has also increased greatly during the period, resulting in a spectrum of overwhelming diversity and complexity.

The year 1960 has been designated as the terminal date of Abstract Expressionism, that style of New York painting credited with having brought international recognition to American painting. In the 1950's this style clearly dominated the *avant-garde* in our country. It was succeeded, in the 1960's, by several major new movements of which Pop Art and Op Art attracted the greatest attention. Another important early successor, and the one most closely and directly related to Abstract Expressionism, is known as "post-painterly abstraction."

Of all recent movements Pop Art has received the greatest publicity and attracted the widest and most sustained public interest, a success due probably to the fact that it dealt with easily recognized subjects. In many examples common objects became blatantly assertive. The excessive familiarity of these subjects produced a sensation when they were presented as the motif of serious painting, but soon they were accepted in this new dignity and achieved a kind of egalitarian revolution. Enlarged or multiplied images of soup cans, soft drink bottles, screen stars and comic strip drawings appeared in many successful Pop Art paintings. A good many of these works were done by processes involving photographic silk screen stencils. Mixed media, collage and combine work, or assemblage, including real objects, have been much favored by the masters of Pop.

Optical Art, called "Op Art" to correspond with Pop Art, aims at the inducing of strong physical responses in the organs of sight by means of violent color contrasts, intricacy of pattern, optical illusions and similar devices that produce the sensation of spatial depth. An historical exhibition, of 1965, brought together a number of variants of the optical direction. Organized by the Museum of Modern Art and entitled "The Responsive Eye," it also included artists designated as "color field painters," who

spread large color forms, multicolored stripes or dots on vast canvases. Such pieces as Morris Louis' large sheets of unsized and unprimed cotton stained with loosely controlled patterns of acrylic color, could still be accepted as abstractions of analyzable relationships, but the arithmetically measured stripes of Kenneth Noland, the quadrilateral symmetries of Frank Stella, and the overall alignments of Larry Poons' small lozenges presented relationships of such primary simplicity that critical analysis became unnecessary.

Painting that invited the appellation "minimal" had appeared long before *The Responsive Eye* show. Ad Reinhardt exhibited his "red" and "black" paintings and Robert Rauschenberg his "white" paintings in the early 1950's, when Barnett Newman was also proclaiming his discovery of sublimity in giant stretches of flat color punctuated by an occasional vertical stripe. This kind of painting eventually found its equivalent in the sculpture of Donald Judd, Robert Morris and Tony Smith. These culminating simplicities or essences are also manifestations of the interesting interrelationship of artist and critic that resulted in



"Untitled Number One" by Denise Craig, '72 art major

the declaration of "conceptual art." Under this designation would be earth works, envelopings and the new colossi such as the 100-foot balloon of *Documenta IV*.

These forms of art have placed the critic and art writer in a somewhat awkward position, but his plight may be seen as largely self-imposed. It was especially the critics who pronounced anathema against the evocative and the associative as irrelevant to the "pure" experience of the visual arts, now the artist has forced the critic to accept also the irrelevancy of formal relationships and to recognize the "pure expressiveness" of non-relational form. He must end in the toils of a problem that involves him equally with the philosopher and the psychologist.

Vanguard art is the most difficult to possess with secure comprehension, and perhaps, for that very reason, it receives the most serious and the most widespread examination. Other contemporary artists, also greatly esteemed by the critics, are at the other extreme of the azimuth. Of these, by far the most celebrated and successful is Andrew Wyeth. His evocations of the charmed desolation of country life continues the traditions of realistic painting by

means of acute observation, curious discrimination and highly disciplined technical virtuosity. His work is stylistically contemporary at least in its search for innovative and forceful formal relationships that frequently contribute the essential character to his moody evocations. Besides the "magic realism" of Wyeth and his similars we have the color-drenched and painterly impasto's of Richard Diebenkorn and David Park whose figures participate in strongly structured space. Well known too is the aggressive corporeality of Philip Pearlstein's over-scaled nudes.

By no means to be associated with Diebenkorn and Pearlstein, the erotic has received its fair share of contemporary attention. From the elegant and witty refinements of Tom Wesselmann's "Great American Nude" series and the humorous suggestiveness of Claes Oldenburg's soft objects to the explicit candor of the latest revelations, painting and sculpture have at least kept abreast of the experimental and commercial cinema.

The contemporary situation can be interpreted as a dialogue and an interaction between the artists and the



"The Nightmare" by Anne Coleman, '74



"Portrait of a Friend" by Anne Wallace Glover '72

critics, some of whom exchange roles. Both parties to the dialogue are heavily involved with the academics, that is to say the art departments that have flourished in the thousands of schools, colleges and universities, above all in the United States, and which provide the livelihood of most artists and writers on art. These institutions have forced a strong intellectual orientation upon the arts.

The art historian has played the capital role in bringing the arts of design to their present position of importance and dignity in the universities. They have made of their field a discipline demanding vast erudition and exquisite insight into the complex interrelationships of art and other interests. Their discoveries and interpretations have, however, meant far less to an ever growing art public than have the magnificent art books produced since World War II in constantly increasing numbers and lavishness of presentation by the publishing industry throughout the affluent world. The splendid editions of Skira and Abrams have made it possible for a numerous public to become familiar, through good color reproductions, not only with hundreds of masterpieces of the past but also with the work of our most successful contemporaries.

The art book and the art magazine have multiplied the number of connoisseurs and the collectors by tens of thousands. Few can afford original works by "the giant reputations," unless these be in the form of the original print. Printmaking has experienced an unprecedented advance in recent years. The invention and development of

new techniques and processes have been accompanied by a corresponding upsurge of interest in collecting. The printmaking departments in art schools, colleges and universities are today perhaps the most animated and popular of the whole creative studio program.

We now have a booming art world which nevertheless suffers some serious and apparently paradoxical dislocations. In the United States, where we have a large and sophisticated art public, the art museums and public galleries are in a period of financial crisis, some of them obliged to curtail their operations importantly. In a country where a single small painting will be bought for more than \$5,000,000, the staffs of certain museums are being reduced for lack of money. While \$50 art books sell out the edition in a few months, many excellent artists sell only a fraction of their production at very modest prices. One reason for this perhaps is that the vanguard artist and the vanguard critic have made it too difficult for most of us with just a layman's interest in art to understand what is going on.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

An excellent brief survey of modern art in America is Barbara Rose's *American Art since 1900*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1967. Particularly recommended are chapters 6, 7 and 8. Also very useful is Barbara Rose's introduction: "The Practice, Theory, and Criticism of Art in America," in her *Readings in American Art Since 1900*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1968. An interesting collection of articles is found in the paperback edited by Gregory Batcock, *The New Art, a Critical Anthology*, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1966. Harold Rosenberg, art writer for the *New Yorker Magazine*, has published an excellent selection of his articles in *The Anxious Object, Art Today and Its Audience*, A Mentor Book, The New American Library, New York, 1966. By a younger critic and product of the university is Max Kostoff's *Renderings*, Clarion paperback, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1969. For Pop Art there is *Pop Art* by Lucy R. Lippard with contributions from Lawrence Alloway, Nicolas Calas and Nancy Marmer, Praeger, New York, 1966. Really to keep up with the current situation it is necessary to look at the art magazines such as *Art Forum*, *Art News*, *Arts Magazine*, and *Art in America*.



"*Girl Looking at TV*" by Ann Jeter Jones, of the Class of '72

---

## *Modern Poetry: A Stay Against Chaos*

---

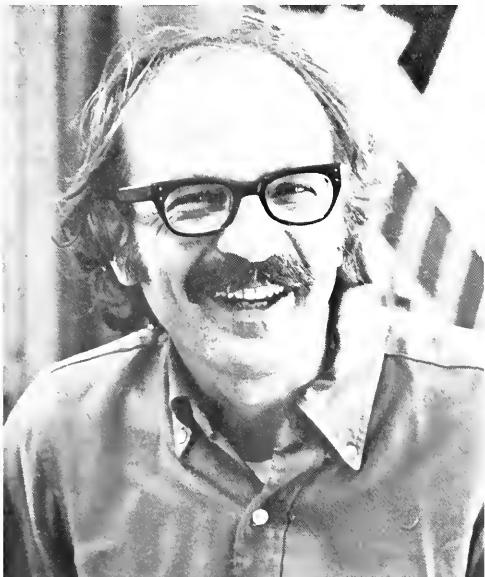
By JAMES D. LOTT

*Associate Professor of English*

ONE very striking thing about contemporary poetry, it seems to me, is how very little of it reaches a wide audience. Good poetry, of course, has never had an extremely pervasive popular appeal (at least until the poet has been dead, either literally or figuratively, a good 50 years), but one has the impression looking back to the period between the world wars that most educated people knew something about Eliot, Yeats, and Frost, even though that knowledge might have been rather limited. But who today among the general reading public registers a glimmer of recognition on hearing such names as James Wright, Anne Sexton, or Denise Levertov?

I don't know why this should be the case, though I suppose many will argue that very recent poetry is obscure and not worth the trouble to work through. It would be too easy to dismiss this argument as a philistine excuse for laziness (and it is true that modern poetry tends to be intellectually demanding), but I think that the argument might be met by considering some of the ways in which modern poetry *seems* obscure because it violates our pre-conceptions about what a poem should be. What follows is an attempt to explain three major trends in recent American poetry, but I should like at the outset to insist on the inadequacy of such an approach: the "trends" are not totally separate, and many actively publishing poets don't fall within any of them. Further, I am in absolute agreement with M. L. Rosenthal's statement, "Poetry can be understood one poem at a time only" (*The New Poets*). Nevertheless, I think that understanding some major directions which poetry seems to be taking can help the reader as he approaches that "one poem."

First of all, there has been over the past 15 years a development away from objectivity in poetry. The attempt on the part of the poet to establish a distance between himself and his material—a necessary step in the poetry of such writers as Eliot, Auden, and John Crowe Ransom—has given way to a subjective treatment, often in agonizingly personal terms, of the poet's own experiences. Older, traditional poets have always dealt, of course, with their own experiences, but the tendency of such poets was to validate their experience by referring it to universal human experience, perhaps by using symbols drawn from western Christian tradition or by suggesting relationships between particular experiences and myths. In his poem *Musée des Beaux Arts*, for instance, Auden deals with an individual's understanding of the way in which suffering is hardly ever



Now in his tenth year as professor and head of the Mary Baldwin Department of Art, Dr. Desportes studied and worked for eight years in Paris. His paintings have been exhibited in Baltimore, Richmond, Norfolk, Roanoke, Charleston, S. C., and at various colleges. His "Waiting Room" is in the permanent collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



**NO ADMITTANCE  
MODEL POSING**

reacted to fully by those who perceive it. But this individual understanding is supported by references to paintings, particularly Breughel's *Icarus*, which lend support to such an understanding. The individual's perception puts him in touch, then, with a larger moral and aesthetic pattern which is identified in the poem with classical myth and western European art. In the poetry of the past decade, however, the individual's treatment of his experience is often self-validating. By this I mean that the individual's experiences are valid even though nothing else confirms them. In fact, there is often in modern poetry the feeling that the *only* valid thing is personal experience. So strong is this tendency towards the revelation of personal experience in poetry that it has given rise to what is called the "confessional" school.

Certainly the most important, and in many ways the best, of this school is Robert Lowell. Lowell's early poetry

(he published three volumes between 1944 and 1951) tends to be traditional in form and "public" in content. In the poem *Mr. Edwards and the Spider*, for example, he compares the horror of death and damnation to the fate of a spider burning in a fire, but this subject matter is depersonalized by his choice of the dramatic monologue, in which the speaker is *not* identified with Lowell; the reader can thus experience the horror of Jonathan Edwards' vision of hell and at the same time feel the effect of the irony which the distance from the speaker creates. In his 1959 volume, *Life Studies*, however, Lowell showed an increasing concern with autobiography, a concern which has extended in his work through the 1960's. In a poem entitled *Waking in the Blue*, for instance, he describes the coming of morning in the mental hospital where he was a patient. The Christian imagery which recurs throughout his earlier work is replaced by an intensely personal, yet



vividly precise imagery: he notes how the "crows maunder on the petrified fairway," and he describes how he, after observing other patients "twice my age and half my weight," reaches the chilling conclusion: "We are all old-timers,/ each of us holds a locked razor." Lowell's poetry is frank, often brutally or embarrassingly so, in its treatment of his relationships with his parents and wife, his experiences in a mental hospital, his bouts with alcohol. However, his most recent poetry, while still strongly personal, seems quieter, though there is no triumph, only resignation: "I am tired. Everyone's tired of my turmoil."

Two other significant "confessionalists" are Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton. Sylvia Plath's poems are painful translations of the poet's personal agony into powerful images and unique subjective myths: in *Lady Lazarus*, for instance, she describes a continuous process of dying and being reborn and the increasing pull towards a death which is permanent. Anne Sexton's poems are less macabre in their imagery, though in their own way no less powerful. Her subject matter centers on herself as a woman: wife, lover, mother. She is capable in a poem like *Man and Wife* of creating a searing, yet somehow comic comparison between a married couple and a pair of pigeons "who came to the suburbs/by mistake" and who now "can only hang on, / their red claws wound like bracelets / around the same limb."

\* \* \*

A second major trend is that away from traditional forms. Almost every poet who began writing before the mid-1950's shows a movement from metrical tightness towards looseness (and this change in technique often accompanies the shift towards more personal subject matter. Lowell's autobiographical poems, for instance, are freer in structure than his earlier works.) The chief apologist for the "anti-traditionalists" has been Charles Olson, who taught at Black Mountain College and edited there a short-lived but influential journal called *Black Mountain Review*. Olson argues essentially that the controlling factor in a line of poetry ought to be the breath of the poet, not an artificial meter. The sort of meter-less poetry which results is therefore sometimes called "projective" verse. Such poets as Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, and Denise Levertov are among the best of those who work with the short, spare lines which are typical of projective poetry. Denise Levertov, for instance, who began her career as a "traditional" poet, uses the freer forms to work out in unique ways her concern with poetic harmony. In her poem *Art*, for instance, she gives a personal twist to the traditional

idea that the artist eternalizes what is temporary in his experience:

And the austere coin  
a tractor turns up in a  
building site  
reveals an emperor.

The austere lines work well for her also when she treats a second major theme in her poetry—what it means to be a woman. In *Stepping Westward* she rejoices in her ability as a woman to turn burdens into sources of wonder:

If I bear burdens  
they begin to be remembered  
as gifts, goods, a basket  
of bread that hurts  
my shoulders but closes me  
in fragrance. I can  
eat as I go.

A third movement, related both to the impulse towards confession and the turning away from traditional poetic forms, is that which rejects the "objective" image associated in this country with the works of William Carlos Williams and argues instead for the use in poetry of subjective images which are drawn from the poet's subconsciousness and which often have no rational connection with other images in the poem. This is not to say that the images are unconnected; on the contrary, they are more closely related than reason could render them, since they are connected on a more profound level: that of the poet's unconscious. Poets who reflect to some degree this attitude towards poetry include Robert Bly, John Ashbery, and James Wright. In Wright's poem *Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota*, the poet begins beautifully with the description, "Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly, / Asleep on the black trunk, / Blowing like a leaf in green shadow." But then, through a series of images connected arbitrarily by the poet's perception of them, the poem concludes on a depressing note of realization: "I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on. / A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home. / I have wasted my life." While difficult to reduce to rational analysis, Wright's images can be powerfully striking and evocative: "When I stand upright in the wind, / My bones turn to dark emeralds." And they can be both elegant and foreboding:

This cold winter  
Moon spills the inhuman fire  
Of jewels  
Into my hands.

Several quick points ought finally to be made. First, in noting three "trends," I have emphasized "innovations": such a summary fails to take into account the presence of a number of poets who continue to write actively and well in traditional forms and to objectify rather than personalize subject matter. The prime example in the 1960's and 1970's is Richard Wilbur, whose poems are marked by a craftsmanship which results from a close attention to meter and rhyme and an exactness of metaphor and imagery which is literally unsurpassed.

Second, because poetry is more personal than earlier poetry tended to be, it strikes notes of candor which may be shocking to many readers. Words which 20 years ago could not have been printed are not uncommon in contemporary poetry. Now is not the time to attack or defend this practice, and I note it merely as fact, as a corollary both to a heightened sense of honesty and to an obvious desire of some poets to shock.

Third, I have not mentioned the public-protest poets: Alan Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The major controversy in the late 1950's was that between these writers and the so-called "academic" writers, and the popular poets have done us a favor by pulling poetry away from some of its affectations and preciousness, but they themselves, while worth reading, often fall into bombast and hysteria.

Finally, it seems to me that one pervasive attitude towards much of modern poetry is that it is depressing. I would make two replies to that. First, that judgment misses the fact that there is a great deal of first-rate humor in the wit of many modern poets: the slapstick comedy of Kenneth Koch, the decadent but self-ironic campy pose of Frank O'Hara, and the affirmative humor of many of John Berryman's "Dream Songs" are three examples. Second, I would argue that it is true that many modern poets (like many modern non-poets) see the universe as a pretty terrible and terrifying place. But absolute despair involves giving up: in much poetry being written now the poet, having abandoned the order which the patterns of

tradition seemed to offer an earlier generation, nevertheless asserts his power to withstand terror, and the poem thus becomes a stay against chaos. There is in the creative act itself something positive and hopeful.



*Associate professor of English, Dr. Lott has degrees from Tennessee, Vanderbilt, and Wisconsin universities. He joined Mary Baldwin in 1964, and directed the Oxford study program in 1968. His poems have been published in Christian Century, Cardinal Poetry Review, and Voices International and won a prize in the Norfolk Fine Arts Festival of 1971. His special research is in the poetry of Alexander Pope.*

*Note about texts: I recommend that individuals and groups who want to study modern poetry choose a single poet and concentrate on his works. For those who want an anthology of modern poetry, I recommend two: "The Contemporary American Poets: American Poetry Since 1940," edited by Mark Strand (The World Publishing Company,*

*Meridian Books, 1969) and "Contemporary American Poetry," edited by A. Poulin (Houghton Mifflin Paperback, 1971). The Strand volume is more inclusive, including some work from 92 poets. The Poulin volume is limited to 22 poets, but the selections representing each poet are, of course, more extensive than in the Strand volume.*

# Film-Making: A Lively Art

By BEN HUDDLESTON SMITH, JR.

Professor of English

Most of us 35 and over think of the motion-picture camera (if we think of it at all) as an instrument for recording important moments—baby's first steps or a flight to outer space; for transmitting information—how glass is made; or for providing entertainment—the typical Hollywood thriller, western, spectacular, musical, or comedy. But now, primarily because of a highly developed visual consciousness (thanks to television) and the impact of the foreign "art" film, a whole generation sees the motion-picture camera as a particularly potent means of artistic expression and aesthetic satisfaction. And numbers of this generation ranging in age from, say, the early 20's to the mid-30's have laid hold of a Bolex or an Aeroflex 16mm camera and undertaken to express themselves or to interpret their world visually. And all of this has resulted in a spate of films (the most recent catalogue of The Film-Makers' Cooperative is 357 pages) mostly short and relatively inexpensive, ranging in quality from breath-taking to excruciating.

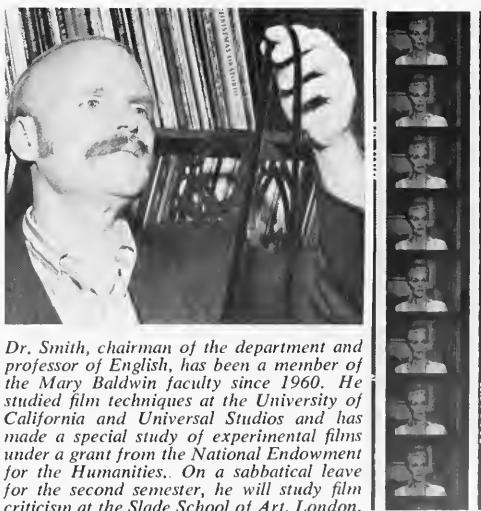
But the more talented of these film-makers have been about the double task of discovering the resources of their cameras and of their own visual perceptions, just as an aspiring poet goes about the task of discovering some of the resources of language at the same time that he develops his own "voice." And these film-makers have produced a number of very interesting experiments, a few of which I had the opportunity of investigating last summer under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. And although my study of this subject is still at a very preliminary stage, I think I am prepared to offer a few observations on the current experimental film.

One obvious trend and it isn't altogether new, is the tendency toward abstraction. Using the techniques of animation (the techniques so well-used by Disney, especially in his early cartoons) film-makers have been working with abstract shapes and forms in motion at least since Hans Richter in the early '20's. But recent technological advances have given this kind of film-making a new impetus, and certain abstract film-makers, most notably the brothers James and John Whitney utilize computers in the creation of abstract images in motion. (Basically the computer is programmed to "draw" on a cathode ray tube and what the computer draws is automatically photographed.) Other processes of light manipulation, involving the use of oscilloscopes, oil baths, and various optical instruments are also in fairly wide use. Jordan Belson's

"Allures" (1964) though not a computer film, is a particularly pleasing example of the current abstract film. In it particles of light move with great beauty and grace to the accompaniment of electronic music to form shifting patterns which are always in a state of becoming. One needs to resort to metaphor in describing it. Perhaps the expression "cosmic dance" fits.

In addition to films like Belson's which are abstract in the same sense that many contemporary paintings are, there are films which create abstract patterns by separating or withdrawing (*i.e.*, "abstracting") objects from their normal contexts or by examining them from unusual perspectives. Much of the work of Stan Brakhage is of this general type. (And if the viewer cannot give himself over to the shape, color, texture, and design of Brakhage's films, if he is plagued with the question "What is it," he will find watching these films an exercise in frustration.) In "Pasht" (1965), which is much shorter and simpler than most of his work, Brakhage films very close-up the belly of a yellow-striped cat in the process of giving birth, and he uses special lighting and filters to achieve a color effect which approximates that of orange flame. If you do not think undulating cat fur sounds exciting, try to see "Pasht"; it is beautiful viewed as an abstraction.

Although the bridges filmed in Shirley Clarke's "Bridges-



Dr. Smith, chairman of the department and professor of English, has been a member of the Mary Baldwin faculty since 1960. He studied film techniques at the University of California and Universal Studios and has made a special study of experimental films under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. On a sabbatical leave for the second semester, he will study film criticism at the Slade School of Art, London.

"Go-Round" (1958) are readily recognizable as bridges, they become pure form through the artful use of juxtaposition, superimposition, and unusual camera angle and movement. Then there are several films of city lights—headlights, stoplights, neon signs—or their reflections on wet streets, which like "Bridges-Go-Round" are very beautiful abstract art.

Besides this trend towards abstraction in experimental film-making there is a tendency towards what I call minimal cinema—a tendency which manifests itself in several ways. First of all, there is the inter-cutting of black and clear frames of film which aren't even pictures in any ordinary sense of the term. However, when projected, a rhythmic punctuation of a black image by flashes of light results. Examples are Tony Conrad's "The Flicker" (1966), said by some to be hypnotic, and Peter Kubelka's "Arnulf Rainer" (1958-60), which though silent, can almost be "heard" because it generates such a potent visual rhythm.

Andy Warhol's "Eat" (1964) is minimal in another sense. The entire film (some 45 minutes) simply shows, close-up, a young man dressed in farm clothes and hat, sitting in a rocking chair, and eating various pieces of fruit. The camera never budges, and all the viewer ever sees is the upper torso and head of the subject and the back of the chair. But ultimately in such a monotonous context, the slightest change becomes interesting—the intermittent movement of the rocking chair, subtle changes in the light, the shifting of the subject's head from one side of the rocker to the other. The film admirably demonstrates the interest minimal motion can have in the right context.

Another minimal film which rather intrigues me is Michael Snow's "Wavelength" (1966-67). In this film the camera is trained for 45 minutes on the same wall and four windows. In the beginning the camera is situated across the room, which is large, stark, sparsely furnished, and somewhat dilapidated. Vehicles pass outside the tall, bare windows, and normal street noises may be heard, though a single electronic tone is superimposed on them. Gradually and almost imperceptibly the electronic tone rises in pitch and the camera moves towards the wall until it ultimately focuses very close-up on a photograph of the sea which hangs between the windows. That's how it ends—with a photograph of a photograph. But in the process of getting the camera across the room the film-maker has brought the wall and windows to life through the use of special color effects, the fugal reduplication of the same image in superimposition, and variations of focus. Highlighting the importance of the wall and windows, bits and pieces of a more conventional "human" drama occasionally

intrude: two girls enter and leave, and a man enters, collapses, and is subsequently discovered. But this fractured drama only takes 3 or 4 minutes of the film's running time and is played out away from the camera or almost out of the frame at the bottom so as to become totally inconsequential except in the creation of visual irony. And the film stands as a 45 minute treatment of the same wall and four windows.

There is a great deal more to be said about current experimentation among film-makers. I have not mentioned painting on film, scratching it, punching holes in it, growing mold on it. Nor have I touched on innovative camera techniques—soft focus, fast motion, slow motion, stop framing, single framing, double framing, over-exposure, under-exposure—or on what can be done in the developing lab—over-printing, optical printing, and the like. (And it is here that a few Hollywood film-makers are occasionally attempting something a little different: those of us who go to the movies have noticed lately an increasing use of the split screen, the multiple image, slow motion and stop framing.) Nor can I go into such recent developments as light shows and total or environmental cinema, in which the viewer is surrounded on all sides by images in motion. (But if you want to know about that, may I recommend Gene Youngblood's book, *Expanded Cinema*?) However, I hope these brief comments on abstract films and minimal cinema will afford some insights into the cutting edge of what may well be our liveliest art.



# *Upsy Downsy Theater*

By FLETCHER COLLINS, JR.  
*Professor of Dramatic Arts*

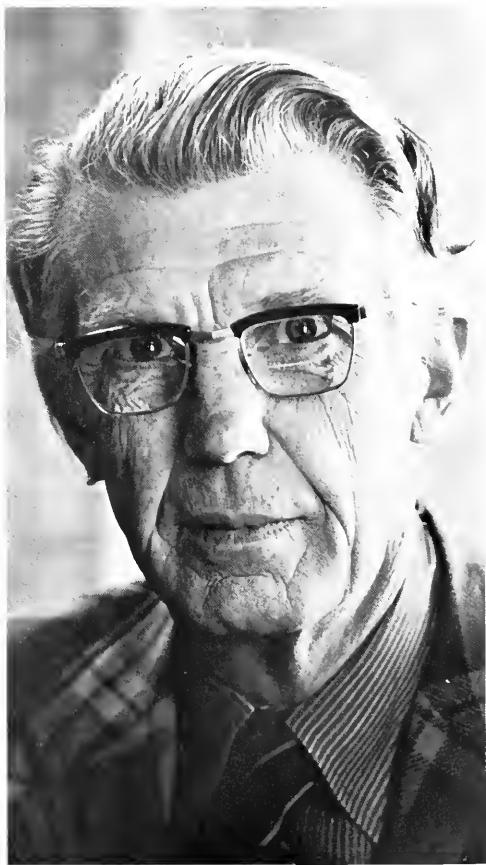
THEATER continues to have its ups and downs, is perennially the fabulous invalid. On the one hand, theater is going down the drain; on the other, the New Day is dawning. If one works in the theater, one necessarily rides the old pendulum, and breathes in as it swings away towards another future.

What has turned out to be a negative, in the last swing-around, was that in the Sixties the theater had a go at politics and politicking, as it had in the Thirties. There was a concerted effort to put down the Establishment, with similar drives to alienate and shock the audience out of its middle-class torpor. In the course of these frantic efforts the more promising, poetic theater of the Fifties was brushed aside by alleged political urgencies. These have not yet been exhausted, but they seem to me to be reaching the same kind of fatigue that the less promising, Absurdist dramas of the Fifties and Sixties have experienced. Giraudoux and Anouilh were swamped at about the same time that Beckett and Ionesco were cresting, and that Pinter was surfacing.

Also in the Sixties the regional theaters succeeded in being initially the white hope, then in alienating their audiences because of a fervor to convert to Brecht and to the Absurdists, and eventually in crying for financial help before they drowned.

Meanwhile the Broadway theater, not about to play that game, grew more and more tenuous in its hold on audiences and finances. Only one straight play in seven succeeded, and more live stages in the Times-Square area died—an encouragement to the regional theaters, except that they were in another way engaged in defeating themselves. No new Big Playwrights emerged, no one to inherit the mantles of Williams and Miller when they flickered out creatively in the Sixties while Albee grew more arrogant and less able.

My image of the pendulum is perhaps too simple. Not everything goes neatly by decades, or in the same direction. The smaller, "intimate" musicals, veering away from the extravagant costs of the big musicals, created some permanently lovely things. Most of these, incidentally, have been performed by local companies to audiences' delight here in the Shenandoah Valley in the past six years. The audiences reacted joyfully not because they knew these pieces had come from Broadway or off-Broadway, but because these musical plays express something extra-political and warmly intra-human. Not all musicals of the period were so pure;



Dr. Collins has been teaching dramatic arts at Mary Baldwin since 1946, and along with that has directed the college plays, founded Oak Grove Summer Theater, founded a traveling troupe of players and playwrights called Theater Wagon, collected American folk songs, operated a farm, and has written a scholarly, indispensable book on one of his serious avocations, the study of medieval church music-drama. The book will be published early in 1972 by the University Press of Virginia.

*O What A Lovely War* and *MacBird* reiterated the tired old political clichés. The significant fact is that the ones performed hereabouts—*The Fantasticks*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, *The Apple Tree*, and *Canterbury Tales*—were taken up and used pleasantries in the provinces, while their politicizing opposite numbers expired after brief exposure in the university circuit, where theater must be “relevant” to the fashion of the moment.

The latest, Seventyish efforts in the “shock” direction, which assumes that audiences must forever be dolts and squares, are Total Theater and a rub-off from the pornographic: nudity on stage. Total Theater is a violent attempt to scare and blow the minds of the audience by involving them in touching bloody objects (courtesy of the local slaughterhouse) or being physically assaulted by the actors. A leading Virginia practitioner of this black art assures us that he always has an M.D. in attendance.

The nudity gimmick is no more adult, is just a *Hairs-breadth* (sorry) away from Post Office and Spin the

Platter. The effect wears off rapidly, except upon starved voyeurs in the audience, and even on-stage intercourse once seen is not very different from what has already been ventured in the porno-books and the skin-flicks.

Meanwhile there have been rumblings, chiefly by disillusioned and angry audiences, about the disgraceful state of the theater. Why should they pay their good money to be told that everything is nothing (à la the Absurdist), to see a peepshow, to be the butt of practical jokes by little boys, to be asked to subscribe to simplistic political propaganda?

Eventually—in the Seventies, I believe—audiences are going to revolt. That will be The Revolution in the theater. They are going to stay away in droves until they have some assurances that the evening will be soul-enlarging or at least enjoyable. This will not, I hope, require a retreat to Sheer Entertainment, but may demand a return to a sense that the obligation of theater is to be a good host in the original meaning of *entertaining*: to hold people together, to support. There are already indications that



Dr. Frank Southerington in "The Heiress of Barnhelm"



Lisa Sloan, Karl Seitz, Sara Belle Eason in the same play

some professional directors are beginning to read the handwriting (not just the graffiti) on the wall. Michael Langham, newly appointed director of The Guthrie Theater, has announced a new policy for that influential theater:

*We are aiming at plays which have what you might call the common touch, rather than those which have the uncommon touch. These are plays which can have a very big appeal on many different levels, so that this theatre can serve the whole community. Not a theater for intellectuals, not a theatre for the smart set or the elite, not a theatre for rebellious students—a theatre for the whole of this community. (Players: The Magazine of American Theatre, Oct.-Nov. 1971 [vol. 47, no. 1] pp. 8-9)*

It is all very encouraging—wow, that pendulum!—that audiences and some directors hunger for more nourishing and delectable food than has recently been put on the table, but what plays are available in the kitchen? The classic repertory, from Shakespeare to Shaw, abounds in

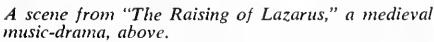
this sort of roastbeef *au jus*. Such plays are classics precisely because they are adult and entertaining. But it is a truism in the arts that an era is worthy of remembrance as a good time to have been alive only if it produces new works to interpret its times, to speak to its condition. Without new playwrights our theater becomes a museum. As long as the only menu is the exhausted stages and stances of the Sixties, serious playwrights have nowhere to go but to bow out and write novels.

In this respect some encouraging signs can be noted. The National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities has funds for the encouragement of new playwrights. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation in Connecticut has an annual festival with adequate production support for new works. Many of the surviving regional theaters, like the Guthrie and the Arena in Washington, are risking new plays in the current season. Something good may come of this movement, if the old attitudes are not merely reiterated.

On the local front, where I know most about the theater, there is a lot of activity in this direction. Last season at



A scene from "Two Encounters," with the playwright, Barbara Allan Hite, '58, on the left.



A scene from "Love Is a Daisy," by Margaret Collins. Actresses are Lisa Sloan '74 and Connie Atkins, '72 on the right.



# Music: The Contemporary Scene

By CARL W. BROMAN  
Professor of Music

Mary Baldwin three major productions were new works in the sense that they were creative restorations to the modern repertory. One was the first modern revival of a twelfth-century classic, *Lazarus* (well received also when we played it at Christ Church, Georgetown); another a new translation of Lessing's textbook classic, *Minna von Barnhelm*; and a third an adaptation of Pirandello's *Liofà*. All of these scripts were created by Mary Baldwin faculty.

This season Theater Wagon—Independent of MBC, acted in by students, faculty and area actors, and co-produced by Margaret and me—is presenting in Francis Auditorium a series of four new plays by Virginia playwrights. Two of these plays were performed to happy audiences of alumnae, students, and townspeople, in October. Two others—one by *Barbara Allen Hite* '58—are scheduled for February and March. Frank Southerington's brilliant new translation of Strindberg's *Comrades* was performed here in November, directed by Conn Atkins '72, with my former student and present departmental colleague, Virginia Royster '64, producing. Nobody has done this play in years, chiefly for want of timeliness and a good translation, and now it appears as an up-to-the-minute, women's-lib satire.

## SUGGESTED READINGS

(Paperbacks, all in print)

Jean Giraudoux, *Four Plays*, New York, Hill & Wang, 1958. (Mermaid 12).

— Plays, translated by Christopher Fry, New York, Oxford University Press, 1963.

Jean Anouilh, *Plays*, vols. 1-3, New York, Hill & Wang, 1959-67. (Mermaid 10, 13, 39).

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting For Godot*, New York, Grove Press, 1954 (Evergreen 33).

Ruby Cohn, ed., *Casebook On Waiting For Godot*, New York, Grove Press, 1967 (Evergreen 441).

Eugene Ionesco, *Exit The King*, New York, Grove Press, 1963 (Evergreen 456).

Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming*, New York, Grove Press, 1965 (Evergreen 411).

Bertolt Brecht, *Parables For The Theatre: The Good Woman Of Setzuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, New York, Grove Press, 1963. (Evergreen 53).

Mary Pallen, "Many Places, Many Plays," in *Players: The Magazine of American Theatre*, April-May 1971 (vol. 46, no. 4) pp. 158-61. An account of Theater Wagon's achievements.

THE negation of tonality has been, perhaps, the chief musical innovation of the 20th century.

The old major-minor scale, of seven tones, all related to one central tone, the tonic, has been gradually superseded, despite its supremacy for 250 years or more. In the extremely chromatic harmony of such 19th and early 20th century composers as Richard Wagner, Gustave Mahler, Anton Bruckner, Richard Strauss, and others, the seams of tonality were already badly stretched. The constant use of all 12 tones of the chromatic scale achieved a sense of tonal restlessness and ambiguity far removed from the firmly-centered tonic of earlier music. It remained for Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), whose early works reflected the musical language of Richard Wagner—*Verklärte Nacht, Gurrelieder*, to evolve a new system of musical construction to replace the major-minor tonality—his "Method of Composing with Twelve Tones." Schoenberg had already moved from an intensely chromatic style to an atonal-expressionistic idiom in such works as the *Five Orchestral Pieces, Opus 16, Ewartung*, and *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Twelve-tone music is based on a series of the 12 tones of the chromatic scale in a pre-determined order, each tone having equal importance. This order, or tone-row, is preserved throughout the entire composition. It may appear in its original order (O), backwards—the retrograde (R), inverted (I)—each ascending interval changed into the opposite descending interval, and vice-versa, and the retrograde of the inversion (RI). In addition, the four forms of the row—O, R, I, RI—may begin on any note of the chromatic scale, giving 48 possibilities in all. The tone-row can be used horizontally in melody, or vertically in harmony, or a combination of both. Several forms of the row may unfold simultaneously. The four forms of the row for Schoenberg's *Variations for Orchestra*, Opus 21 (1928) are: (O)—Bb-E-Gb-Eb-F-A-D-Db-G-Ab-B-C; (R)—C-B-Ab-G-Db-D-A-F-Eb-Gb-E-Bb; (I)—Bb-E-D-F-Eb-B-F#-G-Db-C-A-Ab; (RI)—Ab-A-C-Db-G-F#-B-Eb-F-D-E-Bb. In the first phrase of the theme of the *Variations* the cello presents the 12 tones of the row melodically. The underlying harmony is based on the inversion transposed up nine half-steps.

The tone-row is not the theme of the composition but its shape determines the general shape of the composition. While a tone-row could be constructed in which the resulting melodies and harmonies might sound strongly

tonal, the reverse is almost always the case. The first accompanying chord of the theme of the Variations contains G-C#-B-D-C, the second Ab-D#-E-Bb, and the third A-F#-F, with the Bb sustaining. An entirely new harmonic language results, one that many ears find difficult to assimilate. At the same time one can recognize the same principles of form and design, movement, tension and relaxation in most 12-tone works that can be found in a symphony by Mozart, a quartet by Beethoven, or a fugue by Bach.

While Schoenberg evolved the 12-tone musical system, sometimes called serial music or dodecaphonic music, in the years after the First World War its influence was not strongly felt until after the Second World War. Schoenberg's pupil, Anton Webern (1883-1945), extended the serial organization of pitch to rhythm and timbre, producing a tightly-knit musical organization. There are very few important composers in the last several decades who have not adopted the serial principle in some form or another, either entirely, or in part. Karlheinz Stockhausen (b. 1928), Pierre Boulez (b. 1925), Milton Babbitt (b. 1916), and others have extended it to include the elements

of texture and dynamics—total serialization. Even Igor Stravinsky (1882-1970), who had avoided 12-tone writing before 1952, was attracted by the music of Webern and used the serial idiom in such works as *Agon*, *Threni*, *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, and many other compositions.

This discussion of 12-tone music is, admittedly, a technical one. Serialism has been condemned by some critics as eye-music and not ear-music. It is an idiom in which composers of small talent can work easily. When adopted by a composer of stature it can become one of the many tools by which he is able to express his creative thought. There is much sterile serial music but at any time in the history of music vast quantities of inferior music have appeared. It remains for succeeding generations to judge the music of today. Certainly, few composers have had greater influence through their music than Anton Webern has had on the composers of the last several decades.

With the advent of electronic music in the 1950's almost unlimited possibilities of sound were opened to the composer. In electronic music the sound is produced electronically, recorded on tape, and played through loudspeakers. The electronic composer is able to achieve his own sound ideal, unhampered by physical capabilities of instruments or human limitations of performers. Any pitch capable of being heard—roughly from 16 to 20,000 vibrations—is available, as opposed to the 88 notes of the piano, which encompass roughly the pitch spectrum of instrumental music. Unlimited degrees of loudness and softness can also be produced as well as infinite varieties of tone color. For this music the common notation for instrumental and vocal music does not suffice. A graphic, almost geometric notation is used by some composers.

These vast resources now available must, of course, be controlled and many composers have applied post-Webernian serial principles in the organization of their material. Edgar Varèse (1885-1965), on the other hand, found through this medium the sounds for which he had been striving throughout most of his creative life. As early as 1917 he wrote of his vision of instruments that would create hitherto unrealized sounds and unsuspected rhythms. Although Varèse early discarded the principles on which Western music was based, he never followed the pattern of the serialists but based his music largely on pure sound and rhythm. *Amériques* (1921) was written for 142 instruments, including 2 sirens and 21 percussion instruments. *Hyperprism* (1923), for 17 percussion and 9 melodic instruments, employs no thematic working-out. *Ionization* (1931), entirely for percussion, is purely sonority



*Dr. Broman, chairman of the department of music, has taught piano at Mary Baldwin since 1935. He is organist and choirmaster of Staunton's Trinity Episcopal Church, where he directs a choir of men and boys, and is chairman of the Music Commission of the Diocese of Southwest Virginia. He studied at Chicago and Columbia universities, the American Conservatory of Music, and with Josef Lhevinne, Rosina Lhevinne, and Rubin Goldmark.*

and is scored according to the peculiar qualities of the different groups. This work, whose title has to do with atomic fission, was played frequently at Oak Ridge during the work on the atom bomb. In *Déserts* (1951-54) he combined wind and percussion instruments with electronic recordings on tape and the *Poème Electronique* (1957-58), written for the Phillips Pavilion at the Brussels Exposition, was transcribed entirely on tape. One hundred fifty loudspeakers were employed to amplify the sound of 120-watt amplifiers.

Other composers employing the electronic medium include Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio (b. 1928), Otto Luening (b. 1900), Milton Babbitt, and Vladimir Ussachevsky (b. 1933). These last three composers work at the Electronic Music Center operated jointly by Columbia and Princeton universities.

Musique Concèrte differs from electronic music in that natural physical sounds—the slamming of a door, the sound of an airplane engine, the crying of a baby, etc.—are recorded on tape that is manipulated to raise or lower the sound, to play it backwards, or in a combination of all possible manipulations. Boulez and Ussachevsky are two composers who have employed this medium.

Chance, or aleatory music, has also had its followers. John Cage (b. 1912), the chief American composer of aleatory music, has written a piano composition in which

the performer is directed to drop the several pages of the music, and then to play the music in the random order in which the pages of the music are picked up. Cage, known for his 'prepared piano,' where bits of paper, wood, iron, or anything are placed in the piano to alter the sound, wrote a piano composition in 1953 entitled 4'33". The pianist sits silently at the piano for the length of time indicated by the title. The "music," in this case, is the collection of unintentional sounds heard during this time. In his Third Piano Sonata Boulez indicates several possibilities in the order of performance from which the performer is free to choose. The five movements, and portions within the movements, can be interchanged freely.

Lukas Foss (b. 1922) has written these program notes for his GEOD for Orchestra (1969):

"GEOD—*A music without beginning or end, without development, without rhetoric, without 'events.'* The large orchestra is divided into four groups. Each has its own musical language. Each comes as if far away, appearing, disappearing.

"Group I—Overlapping string clusters, each of these has an inner life (performers' choices).

"Group II—Overlapping patterns (like raindrops), chance formations, choices executed by woodwinds,



*Working Instructions for the electroacoustical realization of a composition.*

*harp, piano, organ, according to precise instructions.*

*"Group III—Overlapping sustaining chords for the brass instruments. Each player chooses one out of the three major chords, (never resulting in major chords, if executed correctly).*

*"Group IV—Twelve songs, one on each note of the chromatic scale. Folk songs of the country of performance (American ones if performed in America, French ones in France, Israel ones in Israel, etc.) played by eleven instruments plus a small vocal choir, and accompanied by four percussionists, choosing from a repertory of 36 textures.*

*". . . The individual listener can, if he chooses to, further realize the composition on his home phonograph, by turning the dial now left, now right, now in between. He may do this in a random (dream-doodling) manner. . . . whatever the mixer does as he gates out, now this, now that music, whatever the listener does as he emphasizes the channel on the right, or the one on the left, all is valid and therefore correct (hopefully, beautiful)."*

The use of the computer is a more recent innovation in composition. The composer starts out from certain bases and then selects from the many possibilities available, after having fed the computer certain instructions. Iannis Xenakis (b. 1922), a Greek composer, has used the computer in the composition of what he calls "stochastic" music. *Eonta* (Beings), for piano and brass, was calculated by an IBM 7090 in Paris. Xenakis, also an architect and a mathematician, freely admits that his music is the result of highly complex calculation.

A combination of media and art forms has been achieved in various places. Gilbert Trythall's *Breathing Bag No. 4*, a combination of live music, electronic sound, poetry, and audience participation, was recently performed at the First Unitarian Church in Nashville. On November 9, 1970, the Nashville Symphony performed the same composer's *Chroma I* for orchestra, electronic sound, and light. The light projections consisted of 640 35mm slides projected on a wall behind the orchestra by eight slide projectors.

A short article can but suggest some of the movements and innovations in today's music, experimental, or otherwise. Before condemning some or all of them as fetishes or non-music one should recall that Mozart's String Quartet in C Major, K365, caused him to be called the "seeker after dissonance." Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was regarded as "incomprehensible," and Wagner's *Tristan and*

*Isolede* was termed "systematic non-music." It is always difficult to judge the art of one's own time. Books and articles can prepare a listener for the actual music, but only through listening, and repeated listening, can the individual make an aesthetic judgment of the artistic value of a composition.

Here the following quotation from the introductory remarks by Jacques Barzun to a program of electronic music at Columbia University on May 9 and 10, 1961, is pertinent in listening to any unfamiliar music, be it electronic music, 12-tone music, aleatory music, or a newly discovered work by one of the great composers of the past:

"But, you may say, electronic music is something else again; it is out of bounds; the jump is too great. There is no semblance of scale, the sounds are new, most of them are, in fact, noises. Ah noise! Noise is the most constant complaint in the history of music. In the heyday of music it was not only Berlioz and Wagner who were damned as noisy. Mozart before them and Haydn, and even earlier Lully and Handel. . . . The argument of noise is always irrelevant. The true question is: does this noise, when familiar, fall into intelligible forms and impressive contents? To supply the answer takes time. One hearing, two, three, are not enough. Something must change in the sensibility itself, in the way that a foreign language suddenly breaks into meaning and melody after months or years of its being mere noise. As a veteran of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* in Paris, I can testify to the reality of the change. At the end of the piece, the conductor, Pierre Monteux turned around amid the furious howls of the audience and said that since they had liked the piece so much they would play it again. The response was no better and the police had to quell the tumult. But now, 50 years after, the young accept those hammering rhythms and dissonant chords as if they were lullabies. They relish them while dallying in games, at the movies to accompany Disney's abstractions, and at the circus, where the music is used for the elephants to dance to. . . . Similarly, the new electronic devices are but a means for producing new materials to play with. What matters is not how they are produced but how they are used. And as to that we are entitled to ask the old questions—do we find the substance rich, evocative, capable of subtlety and strength? Do we, after a while, recognize patterns to which we can respond with our sense of balance, our sense of suspense and fulfillment, our sense of emotional and intellectual congruity? Those are the problems, beyond the technical, which our composers have tried to solve. . . ."

**A SUGGESTED RECORD LIST****TWELVE-TONE MUSIC**

Schoenberg, Arnold.

*Variations for Orchestra* (1928)*Piano Concerto* (1943)

Webern, Anton.

*Symphony for Small Orchestra, Opus 21* (1928)*Variations for Orchestra* (1940)

(In the Complete Works, a 4-volume set.)

Berg, Alban.

*Lyric Suite* (1925)*Violin Concerto* (1925)

Stravinsky, Igor.

*Canticum Sacrum* (1956)*Agon* (1957)*Movements for Piano and Orchestra* (1959)*A Sermon, a Narrative, and a Prayer* (1961)**ELECTRONIC MUSIC**

Varèse, Edgar.

*Poème électronique* (1958)*Déserts* (1954)

Berio, Luciano.

*THEMA (Omaggio a Joyce)*

Babbitt, Milton.

*Ensembles for Synthesizers* (1961)

Luening, Otto.

*Concerted Piece for Electronic Sounds and Orchestra*

Ussachevsky, Vladimir.

*Sonic Contours*

Stockhausen, Karlheinz.

*Microphonie I* (1964)

Nonesuch Guide to Electronic Music

**ALEATORY MUSIC**

Boulez, Pierre.

*Third Piano Sonata* (1957)

Cage, John.

*Indeterminacy*

Foss, Lukas.

*GEOD* for Orchestra (1969)

Browne, Earle.

*Available Forms* (1961)**COMPUTER MUSIC**

Computer Music from the University of Illinois

Cage, John and Hiller, Lejaren.

*HP SCHD*

Xenakis, Yannis.

*Eonta* for Piano and Brass

Dr. Broman with Linda Winner, a music major of '71

**ALSO RECOMMENDED**

Boulez, Pierre.

*Marteau sans Maître* (1955)

Henze, Hans Werner.

*Der junge Lord* (1965)*Undina* (1958)

Partch, Harry.

*Daphne of the Dunes*

Penderecki, Krzysztof.

*Dies Irae* (1967)*Passion According to St. Luke**Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*

Varèse, Edgar.

*Amériques* (1926)*Ionization* (1931)*Hyperprism* (1923)**SUGGESTED READINGS**

Joseph Machlis.

*Introduction to Contemporary Music*,  
W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

H. H. Stuckenschmidt.

*Twentieth Century Music*,  
World University Library

# **Student Activism: Is it a viable term today? Was it ever?**



Jann Malone, the current Russell Scholar, was editor of the 1970 *Campus Comments*, which won an All-American rating among collegiate newspapers. She worked as an intern last summer for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and will rejoin that newspaper in June as a general assignment reporter. She is the daughter of Jane Abbott Malone, '43.

By JANN MALONE

On a recent Wednesday afternoon, two students (one carrying the traditional navy blue dress bag) stood at the bulletin board in Main reading college-related clippings from area newspapers.

"Student activism is alive at Mary Baldwin College," one article began.

"Here? I don't believe it," one student said.

"Well," said her friend, who had just returned from her weekend in Lexington and was on her way to Charlottesville, "I guess I'm pretty active."

There's no moral here—no condemnation of those students at Mary Baldwin who list dating ahead of education as their first priority—just an illustration of the extent to which "student activism" has come to be defined in personal terms.

Just what is a student activist anyway? Two years ago the term was synonymous with "militant," "radical," "anarchist," and the like. Activism, especially student activism, was a dirty word to the powers that were. These activists went to Washington to march in the Moratorium, they demanded a louder voice in controlling their universities and they made it clear what they thought of Spiro Agnew.

Unfortunately some persons still

subscribe to this definition. But for most, the image of an activist is not so black and white.

The role of the student activist is cloudy and confused—he has a number of options for channeling his energies. Choosing an outlet is further complicated by the fact that some alternatives seem to be working at cross-purposes.

In October, we got a first-hand look at the activist's complex existence. The occasion was an SGA-sponsored conference on "Student Activism: Directions and Implications," attended by nearly 50 delegates from colleges and universities across the state as well as our own MBCers.

After hearing 16 established activists





*Texan Tom Henderson leads a workshop on pressure groups.*

(who were not students) offer us at least 16 different sets of options, theories and advice on how to effect social change, MBC's own activists are still sorting things out. At last count, 827 combinations of ways to be active had been found, and it is doubtful that the visiting activists have made any more headway in narrowing down the possibilities.

As one student put it, "There are just too many options." Obviously, activism moves in more than one direction. The only drawback is that the budding activist is faced with a choice, if that is indeed a drawback. After all, who wants to be told that there is only one way to change the world?

In all the advice handed out during the conference, none openly advocated using violence to effect change, which is just as well. Things could have



*President William W. Kelly and keynoter Edward Schwartz*

gotten a little tense around here had anyone started clamoring for destroying the computer or burning down the dining hall.

There were hints of violent methods, however, and they came from those activists who advocated working outside the system, either by ignoring it or by putting pressure on it.

Murray Milner, professor of sociology at New York University and an ignorer, suggested that Americans are "hung up" on working within the system; they are "afraid to think seriously about other possibilities (revolution)," because of an unwillingness to "think about the costs."

The best strategy, he said, is to "drop out, to say nothing can be done with this system, and to start building for the new one."

A soft-spoken man with a full white beard, a hand-carved cane and a hat given to him by Johnny Cash agreed.



*Stanley B. Thomas, HEW deputy assistant secretary for youth and student affairs.*



*A student listener.*



*Baxton Bryant, formerly with Tennessee Council of Human Relations.*



Ross Bass, former senator from Tennessee



Keynoter at reception with MBC student Kathy Richardson



Lenore Romney, wife of Secretary George Romney of U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, spoke on volunteer opportunities.



Karl Deutsch, Harvard University professor of government, spoke on the potential of student activism on national policy.

"I see signs of hope always when I meet individuals, but I see no hope in institutions," said Baxton Bryant, former chairman of the Tennessee Council of Human Relations.

"However, we must have them," he said, "otherwise, what would we do with all the buildings?"

Ed Schwartz, former president of the National Student Association, was harder to pin down, although the fact that his new book is entitled "Will the Revolution Succeed?" suggests that he belongs outside the system.

He seemed less concerned with condemning the government, concentrating instead on explaining how to create justice. "Your task as a radical, a seeker for social change," he said, "is to attach the battle for dignity to the battle for social change."

While they have not chosen to ignore the government, the pressure group contingent nonetheless harbors no illusions about its effectiveness.

"The political process has become a game of barter and purchase," said Lowell Beck, the executive director of Common Cause, a pressure group organized "because the system is not responsive to the needs of the people."

Student organizations are often prohibited from active lobbying, but there are ways to get around the problem, according to Tom Henderson, past president of the Texas Intercollegiate Student Association. "I just tell the legislators, 'representing me I say this, and you know damn well who I am.'"

Peter Schuck, a member of consumer advocate Ralph Nader's research team, said that an elected official "doesn't know what's right." Since pressure influences his decision, it is "important that it come from both sides."

One way to "debunk the mystique of expertise" that surrounds the government is through education, he said.

"What's needed is a political science approach that points out failures—where the system breaks down—as well as successes."

Schuck's dedication to the consumer was even visible at Mary Baldwin. After eating dinner in Hunt Hall, he tried to leave through the kitchen door, ostensibly by mistake, but who's to say that he wasn't prepared to make a quick inspection on his way through? "You have to watch these Nader people every minute," one student said.

The alternative to working outside of the system to effect change is, of course, working within it, and advocates of this approach were also present at the conference.

As was to be expected, most held government positions, and insisted that it was not only possible, but also desirable to work for change through government initiated channels.

"The government is a reflection of the people," Stanley B. Thomas, deputy assistant secretary for HEW's Youth and Student Affairs, said. "One hundred thousand persons working in the political system in their own communities are far more effective than the same number walking up and down Pennsylvania Avenue."

While dissent is "a positive force," student activists often experience the "frustration of working in a vacuum," according to James L. Hunter, Jr., the executive director of the Va. Commission for Children and Youth. To correct this situation, he said, the Governor's Youth Council is creating regional councils across the state to help provide a means for being heard.

The 18-year old vote will have a tremendous impact, Hunter said. "Two hundred thousand new voters can change the Old Dominion into a New Dominion."

Karl Deutsch, Harvard professor of government, agreed that "the electo-



(Above) Tom Henderson addresses a general session; (top right) Lowell Beck, executive director of Common Cause; (center right) James Spaniola, assistant to the president of Michigan State University; (and right) a student participant.

rate is beginning to change." More will be achieved by working through the channels of democracy, he said, although one should "speak loudly and carry a bullhorn."

In addition to changing the political order, channeling activism within the system can also bring about social change. The key is volunteerism, a relevant and pertinent way for students to use their idealism concretely, said Mrs. Lenore Romney (George's wife), a member of the board of directors of the National Center for Voluntary Action.

"Shouting will not shout down our problems," she said.

Whether it's volunteering or dropping out in the long run, each would-be activist must tackle the initial problem of deciding where to concentrate his efforts. "With so many options, how do I know whom to believe?" one student asked.

There should be no "wrong" channels that lead to a change in the status quo, but obviously some methods will be more desirable than others in terms of what is destroyed in the process. Most conference participants agreed,

for example, that using pressure tactics was preferable to violence.

With the knowledge of the complex demands of activism should go the realization that student activism by itself is not enough to guarantee success.

"The belief that we could merely stand in the street and yell 'we shall overcome' and that would solve the problem is gone," Ed Schwartz said. What has replaced it is the "sober realization that the students can't do it alone."

Student activism is no longer a viable term. It never really was. What is it that separates student activists from other activists anyway? We can vote now. To call us a more aware generation is to deny that education after college—in the real world—has any value. Labeling everyone who works for change an activist may not make the slightest difference, but it just may make organizing those cooperative efforts that Schwartz talks about a little easier.

After all, if activists are generous enough to include active daters in their number, then surely there is room for the students, too.

(Top right) MBC student Ruth Irvin, '72; (Second from top) another student participant; (middle right) Peter Schuck, a member of Ralph Nader's Research Team; (below) Ray Hanzlik, director of youth activities, White House Conference on Children and Youth; and (bottom right) Panel of speakers, from left, Baxton Bryant, James Spaniola, Murray Milner, New York University professor of sociology.



## We need your answers

Dean Emeritus Martha S. Grafton is surveying former students, faculty and staff who may have met their husbands through a Mary Baldwin friend or situation. What she finds out will appear (with good taste, of course) in an article for an upcoming issue of *Mary Baldwin*. Would you answer the following questions, enlarge on them with a letter, and mail to her at 708 Selma Boulevard, Staunton, Va. 24401:

Your maiden name:

Last year of attendance at MBC:

Your home town when you entered

Husband's town when you met him

Did you meet while still in college?

Afterwards?

How did you meet? Check best response. Also, if you will, please write a paragraph explaining more fully how you met. May I quote this if space permits?

- Blind date arranged by MB friend (if yes, where was he from?)  
 W & L       VMI       U. Va.       Other college or university.  
 Not in college       Blind date arranged by the boy or his friends  
 Mixer arranged by MBC       Mixer at nearby institution. If so, where?  
  
 Introduced by MB friend to one of her relatives. If yes, indicate relationship to friend such as brother, cousin  
 Introduced by MB faculty or staff member  
 Introduced by some friends in Staunton  
 Self introduced. If so, how?  
 Through computerized service. If so, did your date come from a college, and if so, where?  
 Other. You name it.

---

Mr. Edward A. Soetje, director of career planning and placement, would like to know more about alumnae who are successful in the world-of-work, be it business, industry, or professions. Willing alumnae also might be helpful to our graduates as they orient themselves to new jobs in new places. Send your answers to Mr. Soetje at the college.

Name .....

Address .....

Home Telephone .....

Office Telephone .....

Occupation .....

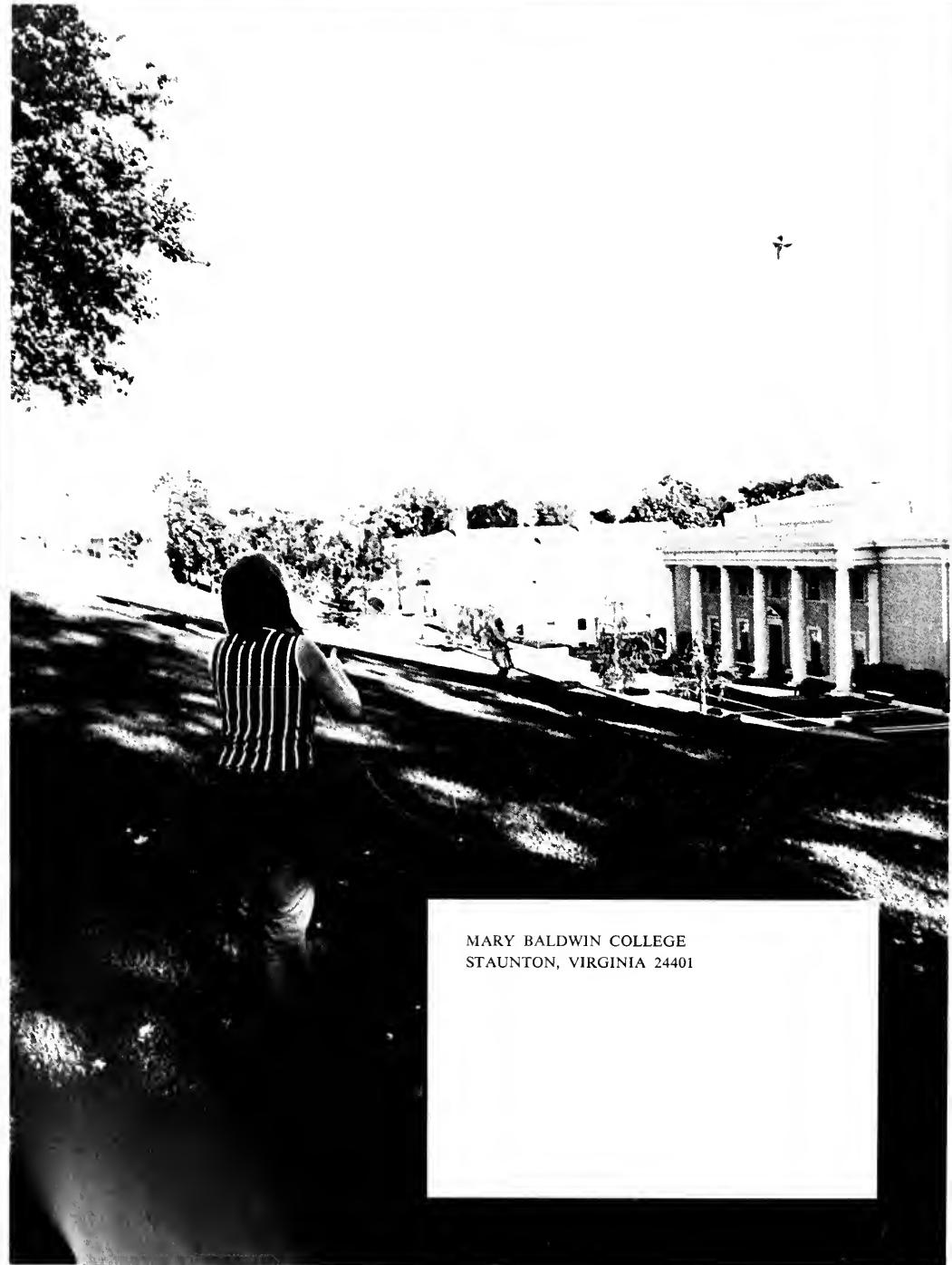
Job Title .....

Employer .....

Business Address .....

Would you talk to students about your career? .....

Would you be a hostess to a job-hunting student? .....



MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE  
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA 24401